THE DETERMINANTS
OF MIGRANT VULNERABILITY

PART 1

INTRODUCTION

Part 1 of this Handbook introduces IOM's determinants of migrant vulnerability model, which is used to assess risk and protective factors at the individual, household/family, community and structural levels. It also introduces IOM's programmatic approach to protecting and assisting migrants vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse. It discusses the model's operationalization and its application at different stages of migration and in countries of origin, transit and destination.

The information presented in Part 1 is intended for case managers, service providers, local and national government officials, policymakers and decision makers, development partners, and members of the international community.

Scope and purpose

This Handbook is intended for case managers, service providers, communities, development entities and States working to provide protection and assistance to migrants vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse, or to mitigate and reduce factors contributing to migrant vulnerability. The guidelines, practices and standards it describes can be adapted and applied to a range of situations, including crisis, emergency, humanitarian, transition, developing and developed contexts.

For the purposes of the Handbook, the term "migrant vulnerable to violence, exploitation or abuse" means a migrant or group of migrants exposed to or with experience of violence, exploitation or abuse within a migration context and with limited capability to avoid, resist, cope or recover, as a result of the unique interaction of individual, household/family, community and structural characteristics and conditions.

The term "migrant" does not refer to refugees, asylum seekers or stateless persons, for whom specific protection regimes exist under international law, but it may refer to victims of trafficking in persons and smuggled migrants, who also benefit from specific protection regimes under international and national law. All these groups are addressed at specific places in the Handbook and are referred to as such.

The Handbook provides practical, voluntary guidance enabling States, private sector entities, international organizations and civil society to protect and assist migrants vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse and to take action to mitigate and reduce migrant vulnerability. Nothing it says is intended to diminish or affect in any way the legal protection afforded any of the above categories of persons in international or national law.

Many areas of international law are relevant to the protection of migrants, specifically international human rights, humanitarian, transnational criminal and labour law. Nothing in the Handbook should be construed as limiting or undermining any legal obligations by which a State may be bound or to which it is subject under international law. Similarly, nothing in the Handbook should be read as limiting, undermining or detracting from domestic legal obligations or other standards that apply to the efforts of States, international organizations, private sector entities or civil society organizations to better protect and assist migrants. This Handbook aims at giving guidance as to how duty bearers under international and national law can better assist and protect individual rights holders.

Background

IOM has been engaged in efforts to combat human trafficking and protect and assist victims of trafficking since 1994. At that time, there was no internationally recognized definition of human trafficking, although there was growing recognition that cross-border exploitation of migrants was a significant problem.

Since the adoption, in 2000, of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and two of its protocols, on trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling, IOM has used the definition of trafficking therein established[1] to guide its identification, assistance and protection policies, procedures and programmes.

IOM is the world's largest provider of direct assistance services to victims of trafficking. Since the 1990s, it has assisted over 10,000 victims from at least 138 countries. IOM's unique access to migrants and victims of trafficking

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1   See page 25 below for the definition of trafficking.

worldwide has allowed it to develop significant expertise in the identification, protection, assistance, referral and case management of trafficked persons, as demonstrated in the 2004 publication, *The IOM Handbook on Direct Assistance for Victims of Trafficking*, which has been translated into 12 languages[2] and is a key resource for governments and NGOs around the world.

Through its work with migrants, IOM came to realize that many non-trafficked migrants experience violence, exploitation and abuse. For example, some labour migrants were employed under exploitative conditions, but were not the subject of an act of trafficking. Some migrants consented to be smuggled, but during the course of the smuggling process faced significant risks to their lives and safety, and were subject to violence and abuse. Other migrants were vulnerable to ill-treatment or exploitation – in the form of demands for bribes, labour or sexual acts, or abduction for ransom – related to their status as migrants, particularly when they were migrating or had migrated through irregular channels. The migration process itself entails risks that may render migrants vulnerable, such as loss of documents, insufficient resources to continue the journey in safety and dignity, severe psychosocial health stressors, and exposure to criminal elements and gender-based violence. These risks are often compounded by limited access to services able to mitigate or address their impact.

Such situations posed operational challenges for IOM. It was clear that migrants in these and similar situations were in distress and required protection and assistance, but it was often unclear what services were most appropriate, how they should be delivered, and by whom. Eventually, IOM began asking its partners and donors to fund more flexible programmes to allow for delivery of assistance services not only to trafficked persons but also to those considered to be vulnerable to trafficking, and not only to women and girls, but also to boys and men. Over time, IOM and others began to use the terms "vulnerable migrants", "migrants in vulnerable situations", and "migrants vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse". IOM also began to pursue policies and programmes applicable to all migrants with protection and assistance needs, not only victims of trafficking.

However, unlike for victims of trafficking, there are no internationally accepted definitions of the terms "vulnerable migrants", "migrants in vulnerable situations", and "migrants vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse". Further, there are no clear, internationally agreed procedures for identifying vulnerable migrants, and no operational guidelines for their protection and assistance. In the absence of such operational processes, both governmental and non-governmental practitioners and service providers[3] may face uncertainty as to which migrants are vulnerable and which services should be provided to them, resulting in potential and actual protection gaps and unmet needs.

The main objective of this Handbook is to provide conceptual clarity, operational definitions, and a framework for protection and assistance for use by IOM and others.

Conceptualizations of vulnerability

The concept of vulnerability can be understood to mean that some people are more susceptible to harm, relative to others, as a result of exposure to some form of risk. The type of harm to which they are more susceptible varies: it may be psychological, physical, environmental, etc. Risk factors depend on the type of harm being examined and may or may not overlap.

IOM uses the definition of vulnerable migrants set out in the Principles and Guidelines on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations:[4] vulnerable migrants are migrants who are unable effectively to enjoy their human rights, are at increased risk of violations and abuse and who, accordingly, are entitled to call on a duty bearer's heightened duty of care.

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2   The Handbook is available at http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iom_handbook_assistance.pdf and has been translated into Albanian, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Macedonian, Mongolian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Turkish and Ukrainian.

3   For the purposes of this Handbook, the term "practitioner" refers to persons professionally engaged in migration-related functions, such as officials from government ministries, departments or agencies, or technical specialists from United Nations bodies, international organizations, the private sector and civil society organizations. The term "service provider" refers to persons who provide a service to migrants. This can include humanitarian services (e.g. distribution of food and hygiene items) and professional services (e.g. case management, health care) provided by government agents (e.g. government social workers), the private sector (e.g. doctors in private practice), community- or faith-based organizations (e.g. migrant associations and religious congregations) or NGOs.

4   OHCHR/Global Migration Group, *Principles and Guidelines, supported by practical guidance, on the human rights protection of vulnerable migrants* (Geneva, 2017). Available at www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Migration/PrinciplesAndGuidelines.pdf.

This Handbook is specifically concerned with a subset of vulnerable migrants: those vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse. Any use of the term "vulnerable migrants" for stylistic purposes should be understood to mean migrants vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse.

1.1 THE IOM DETERMINANTS OF MIGRANT VULNERABILITY MODEL

IOM's approach to migrant vulnerability is rooted in the belief that the human rights of all persons, including migrants, should be upheld and promoted and that all migrants who are vulnerable, regardless of category or status, should be afforded the protection and assistance services that they require.

The determinants of migrant vulnerability model was specifically developed to identify, protect and assist migrants who have experienced or are vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse before, during or after migrating, and to guide the development and implementation of interventions to reduce such vulnerability.

For the purposes of the Handbook:

- Violence is defined as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, that either results in, or has a high likelihood of resulting in, injury, death or psychological harm;[5]
- Abuse is defined as an improper act by a person in a position of relative power, causing harm to a person of lesser power (including physical abuse, sexual abuse, abuse of a position of vulnerability,[6] psychological abuse, etc.);
- Exploitation is defined as the unfair treatment of a person for someone else's benefit.

The model encompasses not only vulnerability but also resilience. It therefore considers both risk factors (which contribute to vulnerability) and protective factors (which improve capabilities to avoid, cope with or recover from harm), and the way that the two interact.

The model recognizes that migrants and the households/families, communities and groups to which they belong are all situated in a broader social environment. It considers both resilience and vulnerability to be determined by the presence, absence and interaction of risk and protective factors at different levels: individual, household/family, community and structural. Each factor, at each level, is considered to be either a risk or a protective factor, depending on the context.

Further, each factor may have a different impact on the type of harm (violence, exploitation or abuse) migrants may be vulnerable or resilient to. For example, being female and travelling along a migration route plagued by widespread acceptance of sexual assault is a risk factor for experiencing such violence. Being a male migrant in a context where male migrants are perceived as dangerous is a risk factor for arbitrary detention. In many contexts, belonging to a higher socioeconomic group is a protective factor against a range of ill-treatment, such as labour exploitation or exclusion from education and health services. Being in a context where rights are protected empowers individuals and is a protective factor against violence, exploitation and abuse.

This approach therefore considers the vulnerability or resilience of migrants to violence, exploitation and abuse before, during or after migration as the net impact of the interaction of these factors at different levels.

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5   Adapted from the WHO definition (see www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/definition/en/).
6   See UNODC, *The concept of "exploitation" in the Trafficking in Persons Protocol*, Issue Paper (Vienna, 2015). Available at www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2015/UNODC_IP_Exploitation_2015.pdf.
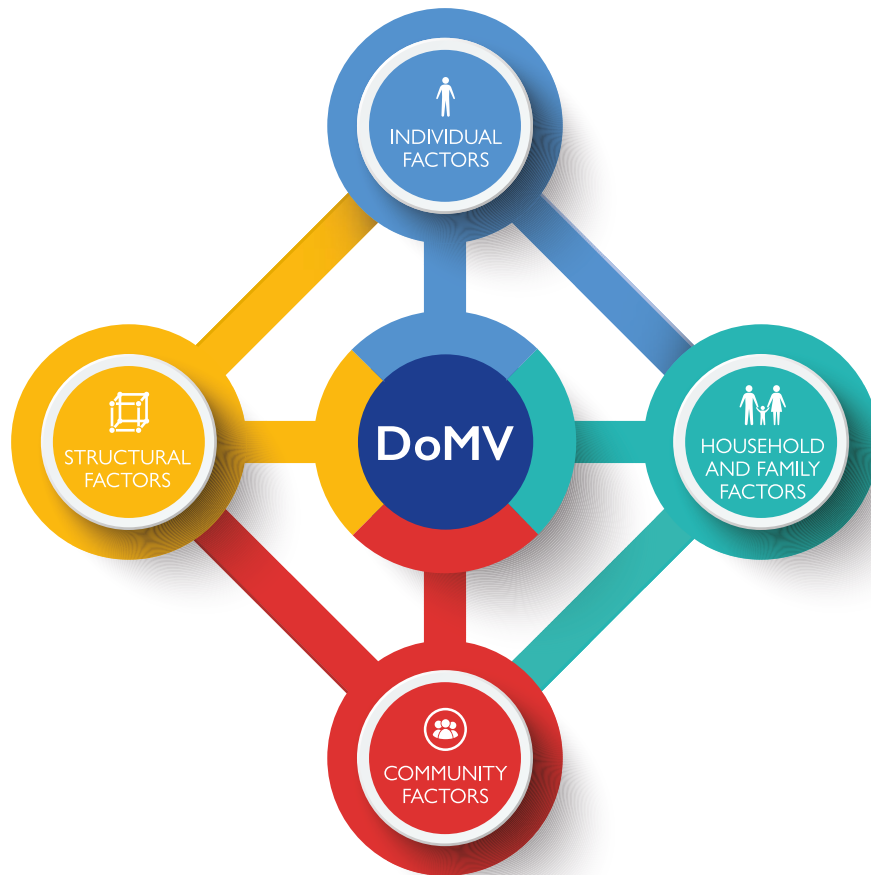
Figure 1.1

The determinants of migrant vulnerability (DoMV) model[7]

Individual factors

These are factors related to individuals: their status in society; their physical and biological characteristics; their histories and experiences; their beliefs and attitudes; their individual emotional, psychological and cognitive characteristics; and their physical and mental health and well-being. Individual characteristics are a central element of vulnerability and resilience, as they mediate how individuals respond to household/family, community and structural contexts. All individuals are rights holders, and the extent to which an individuals' rights are respected will affect how individual factors impact vulnerability or resilience.

Some examples of individual factors are age, sex, racial and/or ethnic identity, sexual orientation, gender identity, personal history, mental and emotional health, and access to resources such as money, goods or support.

> For some individual factors, whether they are risk factors or protective factors is context specific. For example, being a member of a particular racialized group may be a protective factor in some contexts (if that group is dominant or privileged), but a risk factor in others (if that group is marginalized or oppressed). Other individual factors may be broadly considered to always be risk factors or protective factors. For example, literacy is almost always a protective factor, while illiteracy is almost always a risk factor.

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7   This model is similar to the ecological model developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner in *The Ecology of Human Development* (Harvard University Press, 1979).

Household and family factors

Household and family factors are related to the family circumstances of individuals and their family members, the role and position of individuals within the family, and family histories and experiences. Families are important in determining vulnerabilities, as they are typically the first option for individuals who require support, particularly children and young people. All members of the household and family are rights holders, and the extent to which their rights are respected will affect how family and household factors impact vulnerability or resilience.

Examples of household and family factors include family size, household structure, socioeconomic status, migration histories, employment, livelihoods, education levels, gender discrimination and family dynamics.

Households and families can constitute both risk and protective factors against violence, exploitation and abuse. Risk factors can include interpersonal violence between family members, households headed by a child or a single parent, and a history of unsafe migration behaviour. Protective factors can include the presence of a supportive environment within the home, equitable distribution of resources and opportunities between boys and girls, and sufficient earnings to meet both basic needs and the main aspirations of all family members.

Community factors

Individuals and their families are situated within a broader physical and social community context. They are affected by their community's economic, cultural and social structures, and their positions within these structures. Communities with strong social networks and access to resources can provide support and protection to individuals and families, whereas communities without such networks and resources can create risk factors for individuals and families. Some community factors may affect groups within the community differently, making some groups more vulnerable and others less so. For example, social networks that provide support to some groups but exclude others work to protect some and increase risk for others. Some risk and protective factors can apply to all members in a community, making the community as a whole more or less vulnerable. All members of a community are rights holders, and the extent to which their rights are respected will affect how community factors impact vulnerability or resilience.

Examples of community factors include availability of quality educational opportunities, health care and social services; equal access to resources; livelihood and income-generating opportunities; the natural environment; and social norms and behaviours.

All communities will have a combination of risk and protective factors. Community risk factors include practices such as forced marriage, exclusion of some members of the community from the full benefit of community resources, or the presence of natural hazards such as landslides or flooding. Protective community factors include a good education system accessible to all, sufficient access to quality health care, a functioning social welfare system, and adequate preparedness measures to mitigate risks from natural hazards.

Structural factors

At the broadest level, structural factors are the political, economic, social and environmental conditions and institutions at national, regional and international levels that influence the overall environment in which individuals, families and communities are situated and which shape their beliefs, decisions and behaviours. Structural factors are typically relatively stable and have both immediate and longer-term impacts.

Examples of structural factors include histories of colonization and conflict, political systems, migration policies and governance, respect for human rights, and the rule of law.

At the structural level, risk factors include patterns of systemic marginalization and discrimination, conflict and instability, poor governance, the absence of accountability mechanisms, and weak rule of law. Protective factors include peace and security, good governance, respect for human rights, and equitable development.

Interaction of factors

In the IOM model, the overall vulnerability of individual migrants and the households, families, communities and groups to which they belong to violence, exploitation and abuse before, during or after a migration process, or their capability to avoid, resist, cope with or recover from such violations, is the result of the interaction of multiple risk and protective factors at different levels.

This means that no one factor will lead to a specific outcome. It also means that the presence of one or more risk factors does not necessarily result in a migrant being vulnerable, as the protective factors may mitigate the risk factors. It is an overall preponderance of risk factors, coupled with inadequate protective factors, that results in vulnerability. On the other hand, when protective factors are present in sufficient quantity to outweigh risk factors, migrants are better able to avoid, resist, cope with or recover from violence, exploitation and abuse – this can also be referred to as resilience.

Example 1

A middle-aged man having a high level of education, enjoying good health and belonging to a powerful segment of society would typically have a low level of vulnerability. However, he could find himself vulnerable to extortion and violence if he were to engage in unsafe migration practices, such as hiring migrant smugglers to help him gain access to a country through irregular means, particularly if he were to travel with the smugglers through countries with no mechanisms to protect smuggled migrants from violence.

Example 2

A family that experiences a crisis, such as the loss of employment owing to a health emergency for the primary wage earner, might make migration decisions that heighten the vulnerability of one or more family members to labour exploitation. However, it would be less likely to make such decisions if it could turn for support to extended family members, community members and/or social welfare programmes. The household/family risk factors would be mitigated by protective factors at the community level.

Example 3

People who regularly face discrimination, harassment and barriers in accessing services because of their status as migrants are more likely to be vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse. If they cannot turn to other members of the community for assistance, and if they cannot access the same services as others, they are likely to become isolated and vulnerable to being targeted by those who would abuse or exploit them.

Example 4

Members of a community displaced by a natural disaster may face increased risks of trafficking, as traffickers often target displaced populations. However, if local and national leaders act quickly to mitigate the trafficking risk by providing displaced persons with accurate and timely information and by taking effective law enforcement action against trafficking, then the community members are likely to be adequately protected from the risk.

Some of these factors are relevant at more than one level. For example, while sex is an individual characteristic, it influences individuals' experiences with their families and communities, and structural inequalities between boys and girls/men and women can both reflect and sustain inequalities in households, families and communities. The purpose of the determinants of migrant vulnerability model is not to define strict categories of factors, but rather to facilitate a structured and meaningful examination of how multiple factors intersect to influence vulnerability and resilience.

1.2 PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSES: THE FRAMEWORK FOR PROVIDING PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE TO MIGRANTS VULNERABLE TO VIOLENCE, EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

The purpose of the model is to provide practitioners and service providers with an operational methodology for gaining a thorough understanding of the risk factors that contribute to migrant vulnerability and the protective factors that enhance migrant resilience, so that responses can be designed and implemented at the appropriate levels. The model's application also provides a framework for assessing who should be involved in designing and implementing comprehensive responses.

An appropriate, comprehensive and sustainable programmatic response is one that addresses the risk factors that contribute to vulnerability and mobilizes protective factors that enhance resilience, at all levels and with the engagement of all relevant stakeholders.
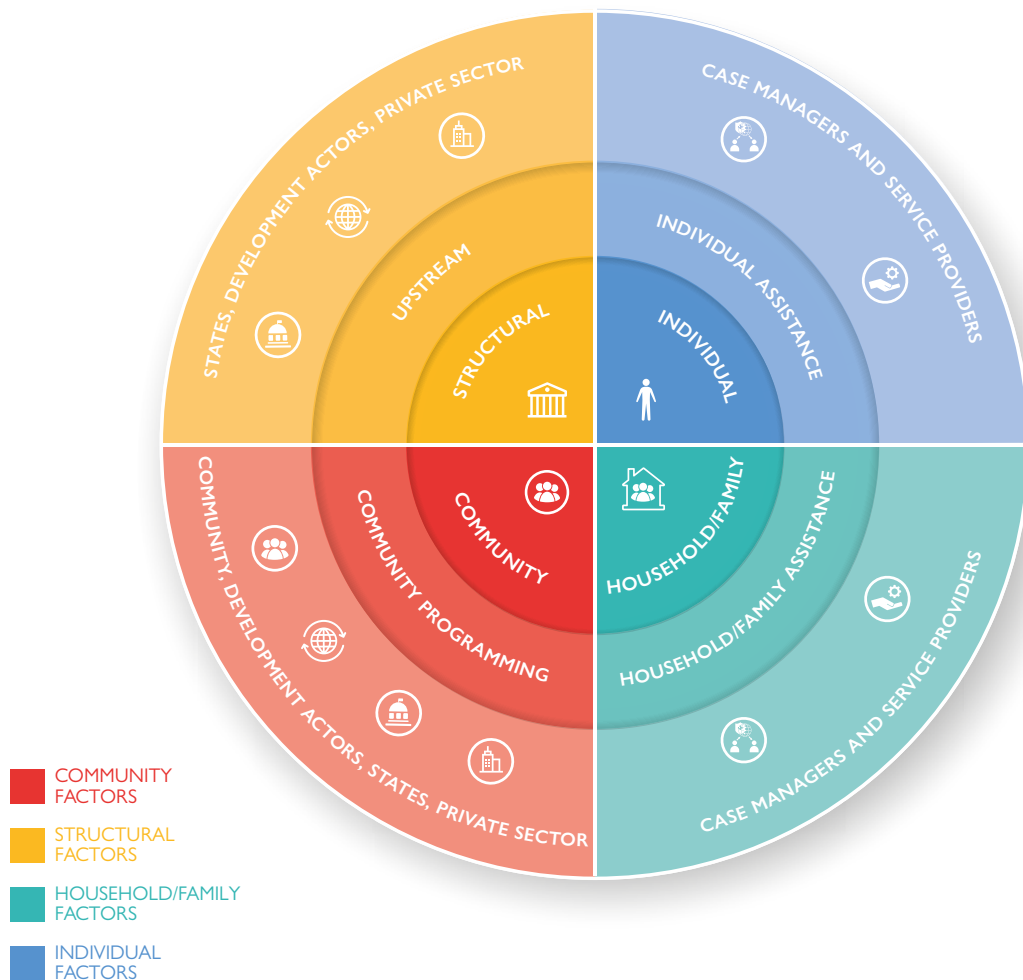

Figure 1.2

Programmatic responses and relevant players at each level

Who's involved in programmatic responses?

Depending on the level, responses will require the involvement of different protagonists, with expertise in different fields and various levels of capacity. Responses at individual and household/family level are typically delivered person to person, by case managers and service providers coming from different spheres: governmental, non-governmental or private sector. They may be, for example, government social workers, doctors in private practice, or lawyers working for a non-profit organization.

Responses at community level should involve the community itself, local government and other stakeholders, such as the private sector and development partners.

Responses at the structural level are typically the domain of local and national governments, regional or international institutions, and major development partners, such as United Nations Country Teams.

Individual responses

At the individual level, migrants who are vulnerable to or have experienced violence, exploitation or abuse require responses that directly address their immediate needs and the particular constellation of risk factors that contribute(d) to their vulnerability.

Examples of individual responses include safe shelter or accommodation; physical and mental health care; legal and consular assistance; education, skills development and training; livelihood and income-generating opportunities; opportunities for regularization of immigration status, family reunification, complementary protection, humanitarian and other legal statuses; challenges to immigration detention; return and reintegration services and support; and counselling on safe migration practices.

At this level, risk factors should be handled along a continuum, with some risk factors being more amenable to immediate solutions (e.g. a temporary lack of shelter), while others require more medium-term solutions (e.g. improving educational attainment) or longer-term or even lifetime efforts (e.g. treatment of some physical and mental health concerns).

Household and family responses

At the household/family level, a holistic response requires understanding the position of and relationships between the individuals within the household and addressing any household/family factors that contributed to their vulnerability.

Appropriate responses may include family tracing and assessment, best interests assessments and determination for child migrants, alternative care arrangements for unaccompanied child migrants, responses to domestic or gender-based violence within the family, family reunification services, family counselling, livelihood and income-generating opportunities, and education.

Household and family interventions may require shorter- or longer-term approaches, depending on the particular risk factors being addressed.

Community responses

Community programming tends to require medium- to longer-term approaches, as addressing community risk factors requires changes to broader social, economic, environmental and cultural factors. Appropriate responses can include efforts to change attitudes and beliefs so that community members view all people, regardless of age, sex, race, ability or any other personal characteristic, as full and equal participants in the cultural, social, economic and political life of the community; efforts to encourage full and equal participation of boys and girls in education; public information campaigns to inform communities about safe migration processes; capacity development programmes that improve community members' and leaders' skills, knowledge and resources for adapting to, mitigating and reducing the effect of climate change and environmental degradation; and community development programmes.

Structural responses

At the structural level, programming tends to be longer term and is typically the domain of local and national governments and regional or international institutions. Efforts to effect structural change may require more time to achieve, but are also likely to have wide-ranging impact.

Programming that aims to address structural factors can include improvements to national laws and policies to ensure that they recognize migrant rights and offer adequate protection for migrants; the development and implementation of policies for safe and regular migration, including labour mobility; the pursuit of pro-poor and equitable development policies; improvements to the rule of law and respect for human rights; and barriers to discrimination against specific groups.

The role of the State

As the primary duty bearer for upholding the rights of all persons, including migrants, the State has a particularly important role to play in upholding rights and reducing vulnerability to rights violations in all spheres and at all levels. The Principles and Guidelines on the human rights protection of vulnerable migrants[8] list 20 principles, couched in international human rights law and related standards, to assist States (and other stakeholders) to develop, strengthen, implement and monitor measures to protect vulnerable migrants.

Principle 1:   Ensure that human rights are at the centre of efforts to address migration in all its phases, including responses to large and mixed movements.

Principle 2:   Counter all forms of discrimination against migrants.

Principle 3:   Ensure that migrants have access to justice.

Principle 4:   Protect the lives and safety of migrants and ensure that all migrants facing risks to life or safety are rescued and offered immediate assistance.

Principle 5:   Ensure that all border governance measures protect human rights.

Principle 6:   Ensure that all returns fully respect the human rights of migrants and comply with international law.

Principle 7:   Protect migrants from torture and all forms of violence and exploitation, whether inflicted by State or private actors.

Principle 8:   Uphold the right of migrants to liberty and protect them from all forms of arbitrary detention. Make targeted efforts to end unlawful or arbitrary immigration detention of migrants. Never detain children because of their migration status or that of their parents.

Principle 9:   Ensure the widest protection of the family unity of migrants; facilitate family reunification, prevent arbitrary or unlawful interference in the right of migrants to enjoy private and family life.

Principle 10:   Guarantee the human rights of all children in the context of migration, and ensure that migrant children are treated as children first and foremost.

Principle 11:   Protect the human rights of migrant women and girls.

Principle 12:   Ensure that all migrants enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

Principle 13:   Safeguard the right of migrants to an adequate standard of living.

Principle 14:   Guarantee the right of migrants to work in just and favourable conditions.

Principle 15:   Protect the right of migrants to education.

Principle 16:   Uphold migrants' right to information.

Principle 17:   Ensure that all responses to migration, including large or mixed movements, are monitored and accountable.

8   See OHCHR/Global Migration Group, op. cit., note 4.

Principle 18:   Respect and support the activities of human rights defenders who promote and protect the human rights of migrants.

Principle 19:   Improve the collection of disaggregated data on the human rights situation of migrants while protecting personal data and the right to privacy.

Principle 20:   Ensure human rights-based and gender-responsive migration governance.

Examples of programmatic responses based on the determinants of migrant vulnerability model

Example 1

Vulnerability: A middle-aged man wants to move to a different county, but his visa application is denied. He decides to pay smugglers to get him there. He leaves with the smugglers by an overland route that requires travelling through several other countries. One of the countries is experiencing a political crisis and violence has broken out. The man does not speak the local language and does not feel safe on his own. His smugglers take advantage of the situation and lock him up, beat him, and threaten to turn him over to the authorities if he does not get his family and friends to send money. He is discovered by a cleaner who calls law enforcement. He is put in immigration detention.
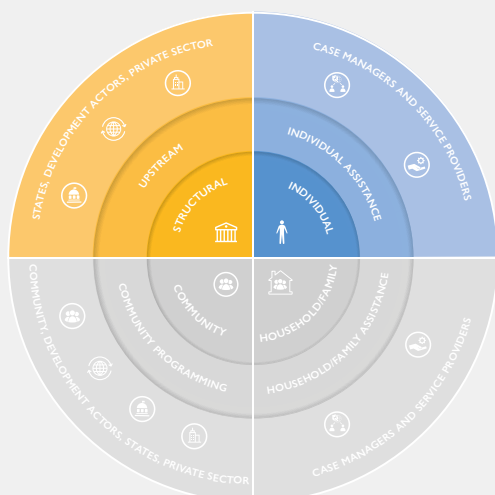
Programmatic response: A comprehensive response would involve programming at individual and structural level. Individual programming could include legal assistance to help the man exit detention. Structural programming in his home country could include law enforcement action against migrant smuggling. It could also include efforts in the country in which he was detained to develop laws and policies to protect migrants subject to violence by smugglers.

Example 2

Vulnerability: An adult woman is sick with tuberculosis but there is no treatment available in her town. Eventually she becomes unable to work. Her partner is able to work, but there are limited employment opportunities in town. As the sick woman was the primary wage earner for her family, she is considering sending her eldest son, who is 16, abroad to work, even though neither she nor her partner want him to have to migrate for work – he is a talented student and they would rather he finish school. Also, the places where he could find work are known to mistreat migrant workers, and they want their family to stay intact.
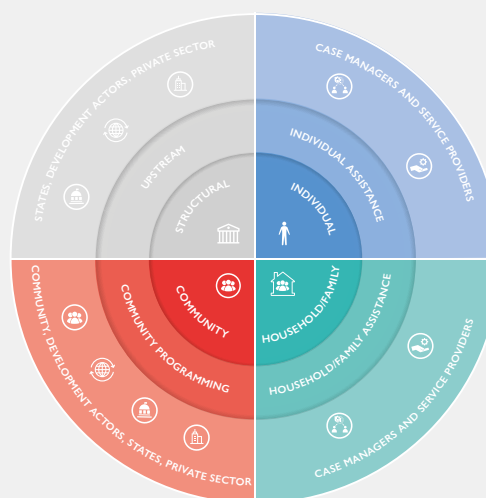
Programmatic response: A comprehensive response would involve programming at the individual, household/family and community level. At the individual level, the woman requires medical treatment so that she can return to work. At the household/family level, income support or income-generating alternatives are needed, so that the son can stay at school rather than migrating alone. At the community level, programming to improve the availability of medical services and employment opportunities would improve this family's circumstances and resilience.

Example 3

Vulnerability: A few thousand migrants have moved from their home country, which is convulsed by a long-running civil war, to a neighbouring country with better political and economic conditions, in which they have legal residence rights owing to a free movement of people agreement between the two countries. Most have settled in the same community. The host community was initially receptive but has grown resentful of the newcomers. Local business owners have started to refuse to serve the migrants, and health and education services regularly turn them away, despite the fact that they have the same rights to those services as nationals. Local law enforcement officials have started to harass the migrants and demand that they pay bribes to avoid arbitrary detention. A local factory employing many of the migrants takes advantage of the situation, knowing that the migrants are unlikely to report unsafe working conditions or wage theft. It stops providing them with appropriate safety gear and regularly underpays them.
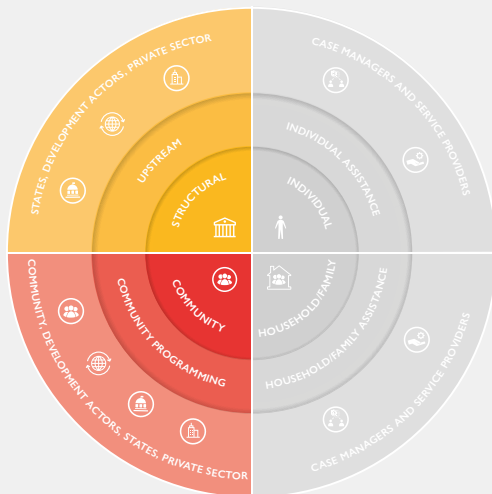
Programmatic response: A comprehensive response would include community and structural components. At the community level, campaigns to make the host community aware of the rights of migrants and aimed at changing attitudes and behaviours could be implemented. Community leaders could be engaged to promote social cohesion and ensure that migrants have access to the services to which they are entitled. At the structural level, efforts are needed to address corruption and to uphold the rights of migrants. Structural interventions to improve political, economic and security conditions in the country of origin could prompt the migrants to spontaneously return to their country of origin.

Example 4

Vulnerability: Abnormally high levels of rainfall cause a major river to burst its banks; several towns are flooded and tens of thousands of people displaced. The area is near an international border, and the people concerned are displaced both across the border and within their own country. The neighbouring country has long-standing problems with criminality, and trafficking networks begin targeting the cross-border displaced with false offers of jobs in the capital. Both local and national governments in their country of origin have been monitoring the displacement situation closely and quickly hear of the trafficking threat. A multi-agency, cross-border anti-trafficking committee is immediately established, which engages community members, local authorities and the national governments of both countries. The committee deploys outreach teams to inform the displaced and host communities about the risks of trafficking, and law enforcement officials launch an investigation and quickly apprehend the traffickers.
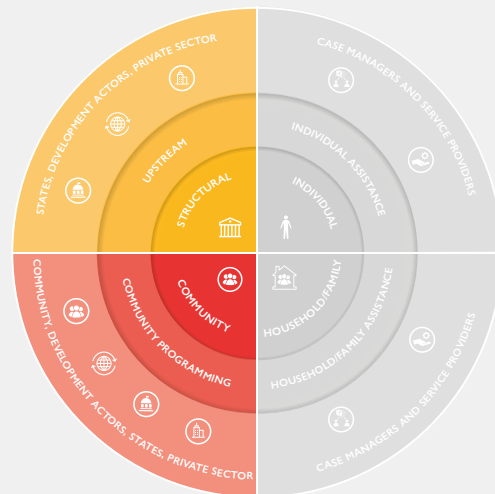
Programmatic response: In this case, community and national authorities responded rapidly and effectively, countering the immediate threat of trafficking. Additional programming at the community and structural level should be undertaken to resolve the displacement crisis and mitigate the risk of future displacement caused by flooding, for example by setting up early warning systems and pre-positioning flood barriers. The national government of the neighbouring country should work to improve the rule of law and eradicate the trafficking networks.

1.3 KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The key terms and definitions used in this framework are:

- Vulnerability: Within the migration context, vulnerability is defined as a limited capability[9] to avoid, resist, cope with or recover from violence, exploitation, and abuse;
- Resilience: The capability to avoid, resist, cope with, or recover from violence, exploitation and abuse.
- Risk factor: Factors at the individual, household/family, community or structural level that increase migrants' likelihood of experiencing violence, exploitation or abuse before, during or after migrating.
- Protective factor: Factors at the individual, household/family, community or structural level that decrease migrants' likelihood of experiencing violence, exploitation or abuse before, during or after migrating.
- Community: A number of persons who regularly interact with one another, within a specific geographical territory, and who tend to share common values, beliefs and attitudes.
- Group: A number of persons whose individual members are defined by their ethnic, cultural, religious or other status.
- Migrant(s) vulnerable to violence, exploitation or abuse: A migrant or group of migrants exposed to or with experience of violence, exploitation or abuse within a migration context and with limited capability to avoid, resist, cope or recover, as a result of the unique interaction of individual, household/family, community and structural characteristics and conditions.

1.4 OPERATIONALIZING THE DETERMINANTS OF MIGRANT VULNERABILITY MODEL

The determinants of migrant vulnerability model and the framework for protection and assistance for migrants vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse provide an overall approach to understanding migrant vulnerability and developing appropriate interventions. Parts 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this Handbook provides toolkits for assessing factors at the different levels. Each toolkit contains an overview of factors at each specific level, one or more questionnaires or assessment tools, and guidance for applying and adapting the questionnaires and tools. The forms can be used unchanged or adapted to suit the context.

These questionnaires and tools are meant to be used in a complementary fashion, with the information gathered from them contributing to a holistic understanding of the impact of interacting factors at various levels on the vulnerability and resilience of individuals, households and families, groups, and communities.

> All personal information collected using the questionnaires should be subject to strict confidentiality and privacy principles. See, for example, IOM's data protection principles and guidelines as contained in the IOM Data Protection Manual, available for download from the IOM website (www.iom.int).

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9   IOM's determinants of migrant vulnerability model is informed by the capabilities model developed by Amartya Sen, which focuses on a person's capability to function (i.e. what they can do or be) and reflects a person's freedom to choose between different ways of living. See Amartya Sen, *Commodities and Capabilities* (Amsterdam, North-Holland, 1985).

1.5   VULNERABILITY AT ORIGIN, TRANSIT AND DESTINATION

International migration is often described as a process involving a country of origin, one or more countries of transit, and a destination country. Internal migration typically follows a similar process, involving communities rather than countries of origin, transit and destination.

A number of vulnerabilities may arise as a result of factors, conditions or experiences at each specific stage of the migration process. They may arise from the reasons for leaving the country of origin. According to a report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,[10] these vulnerabilities "can include poverty, discrimination, lack of access to fundamental human rights, including education, health, food and water, and decent work, as well as xenophobia, violence, gender inequality, the wide-ranging consequences of natural disaster, climate change and environmental degradation, and separation from family". They may apply to individual migrants or to groups of migrants.

Vulnerabilities may also arise owing to circumstances associated with being in transit. This can include threats to physical safety as a result of difficult transit conditions, such as unsafe means of transportation, and threats of exploitation posed by human traffickers, migrant smugglers or unscrupulous officials. Migrants in transit may be particularly vulnerable to rights violations and abuses, particularly when their status is irregular. According to the same report, "the inadequate and often harsh conditions in which they are received at borders can also violate rights and further exacerbate vulnerabilities. Responses, such as the arbitrary closure of borders, denial of access to asylum procedures, arbitrary push-backs, violence at borders committed by State authorities and other actors (including criminals and civilian militias), inhumane reception conditions, a lack of firewalls, and denial of humanitarian assistance, increase the risks to the health and safety of migrants, in violation of their human rights".[11]

Once at their destination, migrants may face new vulnerabilities, such as language barriers, difficulties integrating and xenophobia. They may be targeted by unscrupulous employers and landlords who take advantage of their limited knowledge of local conditions and reduced bargaining power. Irregular migrants in particular are unwilling to access social services for fear of detection, even if they are legally entitled to them. They may be subject to arrest, detention and deportation and are therefore vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation by those who threaten to report them.

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10   See United Nations General Assembly, *Principles and practical guidance on the protection of the human rights of migrants in vulnerable situations*, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (A/HRC/34/31), para. 13.

11   Ibid., para. 14.

1.6 APPLYING THE MODEL BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER MIGRATION

The determinants of migrant vulnerability model can be applied before, during or after migration, for purposes that will likely differ depending on the situation.

If applied before migration, the model should be used to encourage safe and informed migration, and/or prevent violence, exploitation or abuse of migrants. Its application involves examining factors at the individual, household/family, community and structural levels with a view to identifying push factors for migration and risk factors that might exacerbate vulnerability during migration. It also involves assessing what protective factors might be mobilized in order to minimize risks.

If applied during migration, the model should be used to identify vulnerable migrants with a view to taking measures to prevent them from experiencing harm and/or to developing appropriate protection and assistance plans if harm has already been done.

If applied after migration, the model should be used to identify vulnerable migrants with a view to taking measures to prevent them from experiencing harm and/or to developing appropriate protection and assistance plans if harm has already been done. It should also be used to support the development of longer-term sustainable resolution of vulnerability. In the context of returns, it should be used to address vulnerabilities and promote sustainable reintegration.